

## Meet the Sheep

continued from p. 6

remained for 10 years. He also served as mayor of Halstead from 2010 through the end of 2019.

In 2024, the Ewerts sold their Halstead home and moved back to Newton. Bill now enjoys golfing, both for the exercise and the opportunity to spend time outdoors. Anna Lee enjoys doing word-search puzzles and helping her grandchildren with alterations and other sewing projects, a skill she has enjoyed and used throughout her life.

The Ewerts have four children (two are in Heaven), 12 grandkids, nine great-grandkids, and one great-great-grandchild who just turned two.



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# The Church Corner



**First Mennonite Church**  
427 W. 4th Street  
Halstead, KS 67056  
[www.firstmennonitehalstead.org](http://www.firstmennonitehalstead.org)  
Pastor Steve Wilcox

Phone: 316-835-2282  
Email: [office@firstmennonitehalstead.org](mailto:office@firstmennonitehalstead.org)

Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.  
Worship Service: 10:30 a.m.

*\*The service is livestreamed on the church's Facebook page.*

**"We are a community of believers who follow Jesus Christ as we receive and share God's love."**

**We, of First Mennonite Church, valuing the convictions of our faith, endeavor to:**

- Engage our members in ministry
- Expand community outreach and
- Embrace new people in the love of Christ.



## The Great Cat Escapade

A Sir Menno Knight Tale

The moment the final light flicked off and the church doors latched shut for the evening, the building awoke once more. And then—CLANK! Sir Menno Knight sprang to life. He stretched nobly, producing quite the creaky sound.

"Another evening of vigilant protection!" he declared proudly.

Then he stopped. Something smelled wrong. Very wrong. Sir Menno slowly lowered his visor.

"What foul beastly odor assaults my kingdom?"

He marched cautiously down the hallway, sword drawn. Before long, he discovered the first sign of trouble: a tipped-over trash can outside the nursery. Banana peels. Paper towels. One suspiciously sticky lollipop wrapper.

"Hmmm..." Sir Menno muttered. "Either church bats...or youth group leftovers."

Then he saw it. Tiny pawprints. His visor widened.

"A creature has breached the sanctuary walls!"

For several nights, Sir Menno searched tirelessly. He stalked the hallways dramatically, sword raised at every shadow. He peeked beneath pews. He searched classrooms. Everywhere he went, the signs remained: knocked-over trash cans and a glue trap here or there.

A mysterious scratching sound was heard faintly in the background. And the smell. Oh, the smell. At one point, he walked by the costumes and immediately

staggered backward.

"Merciful heavens," he gasped. "The beast has claimed this territory for its own."

Still, the creature remained unseen until the fifth night. Sir Menno was creeping down from the balcony when suddenly—RRRRRRRRROW!

A furry blur exploded down the stairs and Sir Menno screamed. He stumbled backward, dropped his sword, spun twice, and nearly launched himself completely out of his breastplate.

"The beast attacks!"

The cat bolted down the hallway like an arrow shot from a bow. Sir Menno charged after it. CLANK-CLANK-CLANK-CLANK. The chase tore through the church. Around the fellowship hall tables. Past the nursery. Through three Sunday school rooms. Finally, the cat darted into the VBS storage room.

Sir Menno lunged heroically and slammed the door shut behind them. Silence. The knight breathed heavily, though technically he did not need to breathe. The cat crouched atop a stack of decorations, tail twitching. Sir Menno lowered his sword carefully.

"Easy now... nice kitty kitty..."

The cat's back arched—HHIISSSSSSSS! Two glowing eyes narrowed with ancient fury. Tiny claws emerged like daggers. Sir Menno reconsidered everything.

"Yes," he said nervously. "Perhaps we shall pursue another strategy."

He grabbed a plastic storage tub and attempted a sneak attack. The cat jumped in. Then immediately jumped out. Sir Menno chased it around the room in dizzy circles. The cat bounced from shelves to chairs to boxes of old VBS decorations

## From the Church Treasurer

**If you are over 70 ½ years old** and have an IRA, you can take advantage of significant income tax savings by donating directly from your IRA with a Qualified Charitable Contribution (QCD).

**Farmers—both active and retired—did you** know you can donate grain directly to the church? In many cases, this can result in a ~10-30% tax savings when compared with selling the grain and then writing the church a check. Please talk with David Mueller if you have any questions about donating either with an IRA or with grain.

## Church Announcements

1. The deadline for the July newsletter is Tuesday, June 23.
2. The Neighbors Store pantry requests macaroni and cheese and toothpaste for June.
3. Offering schedule for June:  
June 7: Church Budget  
June 14: Western District Conf.  
June 21: Peace Connections/ Circle of Hope  
June 28: MCUSA
4. The link for our church online library is [librarything.com/catalog/FMCHalstead](http://librarything.com/catalog/FMCHalstead).

## Church FAMILY PRAYER LIST

- Pray for rain to come, at the right time and in the right amounts.
- Pray for the summer activities of our church's children and families, that all would enjoy their chosen activity and grow in knowledge and skill as well.
- Pray for the Prayer Team as they pray for the needs of our congregation, community, nation and the world. Pray they would be diligent in lifting others' needs before God.
- Pray for those in our congregation who need healing in their bodies. Pray they would be patient in the healing process and would recover fully.
- Pray for our kids who will be attending various church camps this summer. Pray it would be a positive experience and they would grow in their faith.
- Pray for the kids who came to VBS, that the seeds of faith planted in each one would grow and produce a harvest of a life lived for and with Jesus.
- Pray for the teachers in our congregation, that their break from school would be restorative and refreshing.
- Pray for anyone experiencing something challenging or difficult in their life, that they would be encouraged in the midst of the challenge.

## Council Meeting Minutes

from April 27, 2026

- David opened in prayer.
- Discernment Team: no report.
- Vision Team: Chuck reported that they spent time thinking about the (then) upcoming membership conversation and coming up with questions. They talked about recent visits with ministries. They are looking towards this summer for the 3-year pastoral review and looking for a consultant closer in vicinity than has been offered.
- Care Ministry: Ron expressed appreciation for the serving video last week and the membership conversation yesterday. They met last week and there are a number of care concerns in our congregation. He highlighted the importance of praying for the people in our midst.
- Hospitality Ministry: Kaitlen reported that they have hosted Easter snacks and a Dutch Blitz afternoon, delivered college care baskets, organized meals for the Regier family and gift cards for another family. They are planning Camp Mennoscah meals and plan to meet soon to plan summer activities. Pastor Steve initiated conversation about whether it is feasible to offer something at the church for those not attending the camp-out weekend.
- Mission Ministry: no report.
- Nurture Ministry: Debbie shared that Nurture talked about Sunday School classes for the fall to figure out curriculum orders. They began discussing possible summer Sunday

School offering ideas. A video series will be one option upstairs this summer during Sunday School. VBS is May 26-29 and the Church Picnic is June 7.

- Stewardship Ministry: David reported the budget balance is around \$2,496.52 at the end of March. The Edna Ruth Mueller Scholarship fund is down to about \$150 and if we would like to continue offering camp scholarships, we will need to pursue other funds. James said they are working on the hail claim with the insurance company. Some glass needs to be replaced and some windows in the attic need to be rebuilt. An estimate was received to replace the sidewalk on the west side of the church for \$5,000. James is in the process of talking with the city for available grants.
- Worship Ministry: Denice shared that they met March 30 and planned the Sunrise Service and Maundy Thursday. They discussed services at Camp Mennoscah for this weekend. They are planning to meet on May 4. Passing the Peace has been implemented during the Birthday Offering time to help remove distractions during the Centering time.
- Pastors Report: Steve shared that the membership conversation yesterday after lunch went well, and he spoke about possible next steps with the Council offering some ideas of what might need to happen, but no immediate plans for changes. He also spoke to the high school youth about baptism last night and was able to answer questions they had.

Next meeting: TBD

while Sir Menno crashed after it like an avalanche wearing cookware. Then inspiration struck. In the corner stood a long narrow cardboard box from an old display. Sir Menno carefully opened one end. At that very moment, the cat leapt onto a towering stack of choir chairs. The chairs wobbled dangerously.

“Oh dear,” whispered Sir Menno.

The cat slipped backward behind the stack—and instinctively, Sir Menno slid the box underneath. FWUMP. The cat landed inside. Sir Menno slammed the flap shut triumphantly.

“HA! Victory!”

The box immediately began hissing. And scratching. And moving. Sir Menno carried the writhing cardboard prison through the church halls, muttering prayers the entire way.

Upon reaching the outdoors, he carefully opened the flap. The cat exploded from the box like a furry cannonball and vanished into the night.

Sir Menno watched it disappear, armor dented, dignity questionable, but heart strangely full. Then he smiled beneath his visor.

“For every wild thing,” he said softly, “there is a place where it belongs.”

As he returned to his post before dawn, Sir Menno reflected that sometimes caring for God’s creation was messy, noisy, and more than a little draining. But even small acts of protection and care matter. After all, had not the Good Shepherd Himself cared for wandering creatures too?

And somewhere in the darkness beyond the church walls, one very angry cat was at least... finally home.



### June Calendar

June 4	9:00 a.m.	Prayer Team meeting
June 7	5:00 p.m.	Sunday School picnic at Nightingale’s
June 15	7:30 p.m.	Vision Team meeting
June 16	7:00 p.m.	Worship Ministry meeting
June 21	5:00 p.m.	Golf Outing

### Looking Ahead

Aug. 9 Old Settlers Service

### Treasurer’s Report

Budget Balance @3-31-26	\$2,318.69
April Receipts	\$19,322.60
April Expenses	(\$14,840.25)
Budget balance @4-30-26	\$6,801.04

## Upcoming Church Events

### Church Picnic

The annual Church Picnic will be Sunday, June 7, beginning at 5 p.m. at the Nightingale’s, 2819 N. Spring Lake Road, Burrton. Please plan to attend and invite a friend or neighbor. The menu will be a carry-in meal so bring a yummy



dish or two to share. Drinks and tableware will be provided. Don’t forget a lawn chair or blanket to sit on. The Nurture Ministry will provide games and activities to participate in. This evening is always an enjoyable one of fellowship and connection, so please plan to join us! In case of inclement weather, we will use Stauffer Hall.

### MCC Mini Blitz

You are invited to come tie knots during MCC’s Mini Blitz on Friday, June 26, from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Saturday, June 27, from 8 a.m. - 2 p.m. at MCC in North Newton. If you can tie a knot, you can help complete comforters at MCC. No sewing required! So, bring a friend, a kid or a grandkid and come make new friends as you bless others around the world. Bring a snack to share and your own sack lunch. Drinks are provided. Please contact brociamueller@mcc.org with any questions or find out more at [mcc.org/mini-blitz](http://mcc.org/mini-blitz).

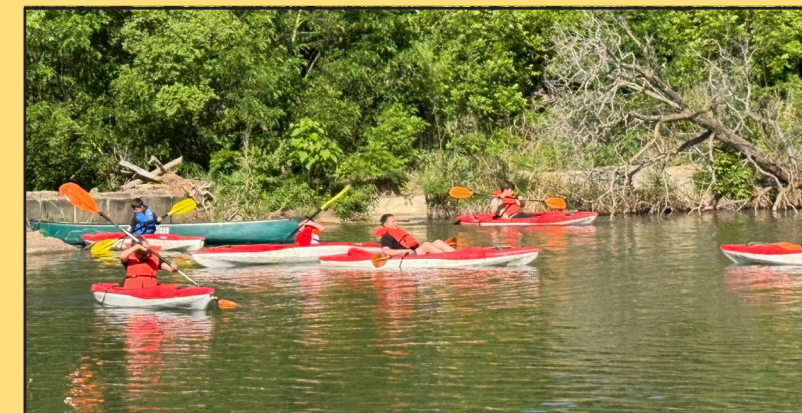
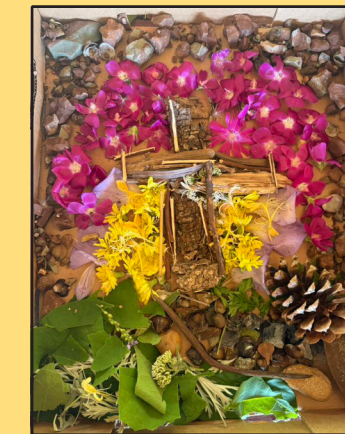
### Golf Outing



First Mennonite’s annual golf outing—a 9-hole, 4-person scramble—will be Sunday, June 21, at Wedgewood Golf Course outside of Halstead. A cookout will start at 5 p.m. with tee-off at 6 p.m. Golfing will be \$20/person, eating only will be \$5/person. Meat and drinks will be provided; everyone is asked to bring a side to



contribute to the meal. Entry forms are available at church and need to be returned to Gregg Dick by June 15. Come join the fun at another church community event!



Clockwise from top left: Over 60 people gathered Sunday morning. The mosaic created from items collected during our time of being present with one another. The excitement of catching a fish. River play is a highlight. Canoes and kayaks are in high demand.



## Church Campout Weekend at Camp Mennoscah

Church Campout at Camp Mennoscah was held May 2-3, and it was a beautiful weekend of playing, visiting and worshipping together. Clockwise from right: Ethan leads the singing before the evening meal. Chuck M., Kent, Gregg and Jason M. catch up before campfire. Gaga Ball is a popular and favorite activity with kids of all ages. Addilyn Smoker in one of camp's main attractions: the Ninnescah River.



## Summer Sunday School

Summer is a great time for Sunday school! Did you know that we have three adult classes and six children/youth classes offered each week? There is a lot of learning going on each Sunday in our church basement!

The children and youth will continue to meet in their regular classes for the summer. Once again, a combined adult class for anyone interested will be offered in Stauffer hall, beginning June 7. You are welcome to join! Our video study will be "The Power of God's Names" by Tony Evans. We will also hear from Grace Parker Sutter who facilitates a WDC group called "Kids Meet Christ," hear from Lyle Miller of Everence and hopefully from one or both of our Mennonite Mission Partners, The Givens Family and The Woodward-Breckbill Family. We also are planning a few fellowship times to relax and enjoy each other's company. We hope everyone can attend and come each week to see what is planned for you!



## JUNE Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 2 (A) Ron & Marilyn Auernheimer
- 3 Maureen Fast
- 5 Lauren Mueller
- 5 Anna Vishria
- 5 (A) Chuck & Ruth Mueller
- 6 Judy Koehn
- 6 Karli Koehn
- 7 Mary Bean
- 7 Luke Haspels
- 10 Phil Aylward
- 10 (A) Rick & Julie Lee
- 12 Brad Rodenberg
- 14 (A) Ken & Maureen Fast
- 14 Marj Gundy
- 15 (A) Dale & Dorothy Dick (68 years)
- 15 Angie Chandler
- 15 Griffin Vishria
- 15 Phoenix Vishria
- 17 Paul Haury
- 19 (A) Tim & Sandy Lewis
- 20 Rachael Regier
- 20 Jason Mueller
- 21 John Will
- 23 Diana Torres
- 23 Garris Clarkson
- 25 Janet Ortman
- 25 (A) Ron & Teresa Gundy
- 26 Lise Bollinger
- 28 Garrison Gundy
- 28 (A) Ron & Karen Colbert
- 29 Randy Balzer
- 29 Amelie Kaufman
- 30 (A) Dave & Lu Siemens



Bill and Anna Lee Ewert have attended First Mennonite Church of Halstead for 56 years, but before making Halstead their home, the couple moved several times along the way.

Bill and Anna Lee Ewert grew up on family farms near Hillsboro, Kansas, just three miles apart. They attended the same church and church activities throughout their youth at Brudertal Mennonite Church. Interestingly, the church building was destroyed in the 1960s with the creation of Marion Reservoir, though the congregation had already merged with another congregation to form a new church because of the new reservoir.

Although they attended different grade schools, they went to the same high school, with Bill being two years older than Anna Lee. Following high school, both continued their education at

Bethel College. Bill's college education was interrupted after his sophomore year when he was drafted into the Korean War. He spent two years in Alaska serving as a radio operator. After returning home, he completed his degree in business administration. During his junior year, he and Anna Lee were married on October 9, 1954.

The foundation for the Ewert's eventual move to Halstead was laid in the early 1950s when Bill spent his summers and Saturdays bill collecting for the Bethel Deaconess Hospital in Newton. (The hospital later merged with Axtell Christian Hospital to form Newton Medical Center in 1988.) Through that position, he developed relationships with many people in Newton and Halstead.

Anna Lee also worked at Bethel Deaconess in medical records before the birth of their oldest son, Jeff.

During his senior year of college, Bill completed a parking survey for the city

manager of Newton. When the manager of the newly built Guerdon Industries mobile home plant in Newton contacted the city manager seeking recommendations for potential employees, Bill was recommended for a position. He began work as a purchasing agent, launching his career in the mobile home industry.

Eventually, the Ewerts moved to Arkansas City, Kansas, where Bill managed a Skyline Corporation mobile home plant for several years. While there, the owner asked Bill for suggestions on where to build an additional plant in the central United States. Drawing on his previous travels and contacts, Bill immediately knew both the town and the property he would recommend: a piece of land at 920 W. 2nd in Halstead. According to Bill, he "knew that the labor market in Halstead was good and suppliers in Newton had what we needed."

Bill oversaw construction of the Halstead plant while still working in Arkansas City. However, he and Anna Lee were having a challenging time finding a place to live in Halstead. To help solve the problem, the owner of a local construction company and lumber yard offered to build them a house and allowed them to live in one of his spec homes in Newton while their house on 4th Street was under construction. Anna Lee modified the house plans to create a custom home to her liking. She also spent afternoons sewing curtains for the new house at her soon-to-be neighbor's home.

The Ewert's house was completed in 1965, and they moved to Halstead soon

afterward. However, it would be another five years before they began attending FMC. They had been charter members of Faith Mennonite Church in Newton, where Bill served as chair of the finance and building committees and Anna Lee helped design the church kitchen. It was natural for them to return to Faith after moving back to the Newton area.

However, when their oldest son, Jeff, entered high school, they decided to attend FMC so he could attend youth group with his friends from school.

Bill and Anna Lee quickly became involved in the life of the church. Bill has served as a deacon, trustee, Sunday school teacher, and member of numerous search committees and subcommittees. Anna Lee, who began playing the organ at a young age in her home church, played both the organ and piano and participated in the Bell Choir during its early years. The couple also served as youth sponsors and fondly remember the ski trips they took with the youth group.

It has been the friendships at FMC that have meant the most to Bill and Anna Lee. They had friends from their Bethel days at FMC when they began attending, as well as family connections through Richard Balzer, Bill's cousin who passed away in 2015, and Marylin Balzer.

Bill retired from Skyline Corporation in 1987, but his retirement was short-lived. Soon afterward, he received a phone call asking him to work at The Halstead Bank, where he

*continued on the back panel*